

## Sermon Outline.

CHRIST AND THE POOR; AND THE CHURCH  
AND THE POOR.

Sermon No. 4

BROTHERHOOD, JAMES II, 8.

INTRODUCTION.

1. A review. We have seen:

(1) That the poor and the common people as a class were identified with Christ and the early church.

(2) That the same class is now separated from and in opposition to the Church.

(3) That the change is in, and the fault lies at the door of the church.

2. We have given some causes for this state of affairs showing:

(1) Why we are rapidly becoming a non-church-going people. That there are causes that operate upon all classes alike and which tend to break the church-going habit.

(2) Why the class church cannot reach and hold the masses. Class indifference and class antipathy is so strong as to easily account for the separation of the masses from the class church.

3. But all this is not sufficient. It does not account for the fact that that class which has always formed the body of the church is now separated from her. Some of the causes we have noticed operate on all classes to break up the church-going habit, and they will account for much of the neglect of the church by the masses; yet, it is clear we have not found the cause for this neglect.

### I. BROTHERHOOD.

1. The sense of common brotherhood shown by Christ and the Apostles. They taught the duty of individual salvation. Christ urged upon each to save his own life, but to save it by losing it for the common good. Luke xvii, 33. They taught the Fatherhood of God but not to the neglect of the brotherhood of man. The proof of faith was not statement or argument, but benevolent action. "Inasmuch as ye did it—Inasmuch as ye did it not." Matt. xxv, 40, 45. The proof of love to the Father was love to his children. 1 John iv, 20, 21.

Christ's aim was not only to save individual souls, but to save "the world"

—to establish "the Kingdom of God."—"The city of God." What is to save society? The two fundamental laws of this kingdom are love to God and love to man. Matt. xx, 37-40. In these early times brotherhood was no sickly sentiment. It was a reality. The love for God and the brethren was so great that "all that believed were together, and had all things common." Acts. ii, 44, 45. And long after when the church had grown so large that all could not be together this feeling of common dependence still maintained, insomuch that Paul in all his travels among the more well-to-do Gentile churches took collections for the poor Jewish churches. He even commanded the Corinthian church to make a weekly contribution to "the poor saints." 1 Cor. xvi, 1.

2. The sense of brotherhood shown by the early church. This fraternal feeling so common in the Apostolic days continued for several centuries. The love that Christians showed for each could not be understood by their heathen neighbors. The humorist, Lucian, told more truth than he intended when he accounted for their love for one another by saying—"Their Master has persuaded them that they are all brothers." Hospitality was universal. Collections were regularly taken for the poor. All in any distress from persecution were delivered. It was a common remark by their neighbors, "See how the Christians love one another." Neither did they confine their charity to the church. But in famine and pestilence they supplied the necessities of their neighbors. Note that it was a love that could be seen by others.

3. The want of this sense of brotherhood in the modern church. We have emphasized Theology and individual salvation to the neglect of the duty of active love. We have emphasized the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Christ to the neglect of the brotherhood of man. Instead of trying to save society by leavening the masses, we act as though it was our chief duty to save ourselves and our children from contamination by the masses. The church is not for all but for a few nice, choice folks like ourselves. Instead of regular collections for the poor and helpless, we take regular and large collections for some man who has learned how to

entertain our kind without mentioning unpleasant duties, and to build taller steeples on our church than our neighbors. Instead of outsiders saying, "See how these Christians love one another;" they say, "see how these Christians try to out show one another."

4. Here is the whole secret of the loss of our hold on the masses. The working man knows that Christ laid down the law of love as fundamental; he does not see it exemplified in the church; and not unnaturally he thinks all Christians insincere.

### II. IS THIS SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD FOUND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?

Can any institution, by whatsoever name called, that does so much favor for so much money, make any boast against the church? I have admitted and have tried to prove that the church is not fulfilling the ideal given by her great Head. But because she does not do a thing is that proof that another or others do it? Some so talk and so act. Some—too of non-professed Christians—seem to think certain orders are more Christian than the church because, foresooth, they do for a man when he is sick or dead what he, while well and living paid them for doing. That is they are more Christian than the church because they do what they are paid to do; and the church does not do what it is not paid to do. The motive that makes one a member of any of these orders is self-love. This is the motive that is placed before him when he is urged to join the order. He is urged to join the order, to protect himself and family, and not that he can thus better help others. Belonging to the society does not protect you, but it is paying your dues that protects you. The church—any church will do what she is paid to do. That is not the limit of her duty. She ought to do for those that cannot pay. If she is peculiarly Christian this she will do. Any order that only helps its own members and those only when their dues are paid up has no room to boast over the church. I do not mean to say that such orders are necessarily evil, or that it is wrong to belong to them. What I do mean is that they are not peculiarly Christian. You had as well argue that a man is better than a Christian because he has a paid up policy in a mutual life insur